

# Sequestration Update Including Changes to Conference and Travel

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Please note the updated Marshall guidance below being issued in addition to the March 5, 2014 Office of Communications Memo (14-CS01-0003) "FY2014 Approach and Recommendations for NASA Presence at Conferences, Large-Scale Events and Exhibits" and the New Conference Attendance and Travel Policy guidance issued March 14, 2014 by Jeri Buchholz, Assistant Administrator, Office of Human Capital Management.

**Effective April 1, 2014**

## **Executive Council Decision Points and OCFO Guidance**

- The following conferences remain disapproved for attendance, except by waiver from the Agency OCFO:
  - National Space Symposium (*Note: A waiver has been approved by OCFO with a limit on attendees.*)
  - The American Astronautical Society's Robert H. Goddard Memorial Symposium (*Note: A waiver has been approved by OCFO with a limit on attendees.*)
  - IAF Spring Meeting (*Note: A waiver has been approved by OCFO with a limit on attendees.*)
  - Rotary International Conference
  - Paris Air Show (and other air shows)
  - Annual NASA Small Business Symposium & Awards Ceremony
  - Gartner Symposium/IT Expo
  - TED Meetings
- The requirement to obtain conference approvals (domestic & foreign) with an Agency-wide cost below \$75k has been suspended. Those conferences with an Agency-wide cost of \$75k or above are to be submitted to the Agency CFO's office for deliberation.
- OIC approval for the following types of travel is suspended and reverts back to standard policy which requires supervisory approval:
  - Foreign travel
  - Travel to launches
  - Travel for speaking engagements not at a NASA Center or not part of an approved conference.
- This guidance applies to contractor employees for those conferences costing the Agency \$75k or more, as outlined in "Attachment A2" to the Chief of Staff April 1, 2013 memo.
- For those Communications and Education activities that occur at conferences, the event must obtain approval from the Office of Communications or Office of Education prior to seeking OCFO approval.
  - Participation includes exhibits, education and public outreach activities, as well as media and social media activities that occur at a given conference.
- All other guidance in the Chief of Staff April 1, 2013 memo continues to apply while under sequestration.
- Domestic Conferences
  - *Attendance will continue to be limited to scientific and technical conferences*
  - *Must be core to the Agency's mission*
  - *There are no alternative methods of participation (e.g. teleconferencing or ViTs)*
  - *Limit of 50 attendees is suspended and no longer in effect*
  - *Substantive involvement is not required*
- Foreign Conferences
  - *Follow the same approval criteria, thresholds and processes as domestic conferences*
  - *Substantive involvement is required*  
*(presenting, speaking, session moderator, or facilitating a scientific or technical exhibit)*

- *Legislated 50 person limit applies in all cases.*
- **What should we do differently?**
  - The only difference is that Center OCFO offices will not have to approve those events costing the Agency less than \$75k.
- **What should we continue doing?**
  - Submit potential attendee requests to Louise Catalfamo for entry into NCTS as soon as it is known they might go to a conference (at least 60 days before the conference). Changes down the line are perfectly acceptable. The main goal is to get a sense of the participation across the agency as soon as possible. **Center Conference NCTS Request Form** can be found at <http://cfo.msfc.nasa.gov/travel.html>.
  - Evaluating the agency wide cost periodically to ensure we obtain Agency approvals when necessary (i.e. \$75k or more).
    - Cost estimates for travel and registration must be provided to Louise Catalfamo on the form to ensure correct estimates in NCTS
  - Submit NF1784 forms and NF1785 forms as required by NID 9700.1
    - Sponsored Conferences \$20k or above
    - Non-Sponsored Conferences \$75k or above
  - Leverage the NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS)
    - The sooner Louise is notified of attendees for entry into NCTS the better our chances of participation (Agency requires 60 days before the conference date).
    - This is the system that is used to collaborate across the Agency
    - Improvements are coming!
  - Individuals must have an approved status in NCTS before travel authorizations will be approved. The authorizations must be prepared with the NCTS # and correct documentation.

Although process guidance has evolved, government-wide policy continues to require heightened scrutiny of conference and travel activity. Thus, your attention to utilization of process planning, systems, and reporting as described above remains significantly critical.

The April 1st OCFO Guidance is located on the MSFC CFO Travel Website <http://cfo.msfc.nasa.gov/travel.html>